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THE NEED OF ARCHAEOLOGIC RESEARCH IN THE MIDDLE WEST

By FREDERICK HOUGHTON

ARCHAEOLOGIC fieldwork in western New York, northern Ohio, and southern Ontario has accomplished two definite results. First, it has established the characteristics of Iroquoian culture for those areas; it has differentiated this culture from the non-Iroquoian culture of the same areas; and it has differentiated the cultures of the Seneca, Erie, and Attiwandaron members of the Iroquoian family. Second, it has shown conclusively that these nations were not autochthonous in that territory but had entered it by migration, and that this migration was from the westward.

Systematic attempts to determine the migration paths of the Senecas have resulted in tracing backward their migration from their historic seats in the Genesee country of New York southward and westward until their culture merges with an earlier culture at about the longitude of Erie, Pa. The Eries have been traced backward from a post-European site in the southwestern corner of New York to a prehistoric site at Willoughby, near Cleveland. The Attiwandarons have been traced back from post-European sites on the Niagara frontier, the Grand River, and at the head of Lake Ontario, to early prehistoric sites at St. Thomas and London.

The attempt to trace these migrations westward beyond the points mentioned has not failed because of any lack of material evidences of their culture beyond those places. It has been stopped by the difficulty of obtaining authentic information about the archaeological remains beyond, and the difficulty, almost amounting to impossibility, of one observer attempting to examine, in the detail necessary, the wide extent of territory which encircles the head of Lake Erie from Cleveland to Detroit and eastward to London, Ontario. Besides, there is the possibility, nay the probability, that evidences of these migration paths, manifested by ar-

chaeological remains of Iroquoian origin, exist in the territory west of the head of Lake Erie. That such evidences do exist is shown by the discovery and publication by Mr. Langford of a site on the Kankakee River which has every characteristic of a pre-European Iroquoian site.

To follow up this attempt to solve a very definite archaeological problem there is badly needed some accurate information about the aboriginal village sites located in northern Ohio west of Cleveland, the Canadian peninsula west of London, and a rather narrow tract of northern Indiana and Illinois and southern Michigan.

To supplement and complete this there should be accurate information about the character of the artifacts found on these sites. In that portion of Ohio lying contiguous to Lake Erie and in the western portion of the Ontario peninsula there should be numerous village sites not yet listed, and from some of these there will undoubtedly have been collected artifacts of unmistakable Iroquoian origin. Similarly in the territory west of the Detroit River there are numerous sites known only to local collectors, and it is at least possible that in some of the collections gathered from these unlisted sites there are artifacts of Iroquoian origin which, if available, might add data bearing upon the migrations of these nations. It is only by listing these sites and the artifacts taken from them and determining those of possible or undoubted Iroquoian origin that the problem of the migrations of the Iroquoian nations can be solved.

Recognition of the Iroquoian culture is easy, for its characteristics are well marked. These are: deep refuse heaps in which are numerous animal bones and pottery fragments; a large proportion of artifacts made of bone and antler rather than of stone; tiny, keen, well-made, triangular chert arrow points; and round-bottomed clay kettles decorated with a band of triangles filled in with parallel lines, constituting the well known "chevron pattern." Any site showing these characters may safely be considered of Iroquoian origin.

There is another migration problem which might be solved at the same time. This has to do with the origin of the Wyandots.

In the decade between 1645 and 1655 the New York Iroquois

devastated the country of the Hurons, the Tionontadis, and the Attiwandarons, all kindred nations of the Iroquoian stock. As a result many of these people were killed, many perished as a result of privations, and many more were deported by the Iroquois to their towns in middle New York. Yet a large number survived and migrated. The Jesuits at Quebec reported in 1653 as follows:

All the Algonquin nations are assembling with what remains of the Tobacco Nation and of the Neutral Nation at A'ontonatendie, three days' journey above the sault Skia'é toward the south. Those of the Tobacco Nation have wintered at Tea'onto'rai; the Neutrals to the number of 800 at Sken'chio'e toward Te'o'-chanontian; these two Nations are to betake themselves next autumn to A'otonatendia where even now they number a thousand men.¹

The Tobacco nation were the Tionontadis. The Neutral nation were the Attiwandaron. The Sault Skia'é were Sault St. Marie Indians, and Skenchis was on the west shore of Lake Huron, probably at the entrance to Saginaw Bay.

There seems every reason to believe that the Wyandots of the next century might have been formed by the fusion of these expatriated kindred refugees. If this be so there should be evidences of post-European Iroquoian villages marking their movements from northern Michigan to the region about the Detroit River.

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¹ Jes. Rel., Thwaites ed., XXXVIII, p. 181.